Doubling of cotton crop area

478. SHRI RAMA MUNI REDDY SIRIGIREDDY:
SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO:

Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that India doubled its Bt cotton crop area to around 10,00,000 hectares in 2003;

(b) whether it is also a fact that according to the International Services for Acquisition of Agri-Biotech Applications Study, India has a large potential to increase in acreage of biotech plants; and

(c) in what manner Government propose to bring in more and more biotech crop area under cultivation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (SHRI KAPIL SIBAL): (a) The Bt cotton hybrids cultivation during Kharif-2002 was estimated to be 29,000 hectares and was about 85,200 hectares during Kharif-2003, as per the sales figure of the three Bt cotton hybrids released into the environment.

(b) According to the International Services for Acquisition of Agri-Biotech Applications, India has a large potential to increase the acreage of cultivation of biotech plants since India is a country having diverse agricultural activities with a capacity to adapt and cultivate various biotech crops suitable to a given agro-climatic conditions.

(c) The Government of India has constituted a Task Force on 'Applications of Agricultural Biotechnology' to provide a road map for adoption and release of transgenic crops in Indian agriculture. The report of the Task Force is under consideration of the Government of India. The report has suggested guidelines for introducing biotech crops in several areas consistent with farmers' interest.

Funding of research work

479. SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY: Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that research and development are most important for development of the country in view of the global research competition;

(b) whether it is a fact that most of research works in India are not funded properly by Government; and

(c) what steps Government are taking to give thrust to research and development?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (SHRI KAPIL SIBAL): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) It is incorrect to say that research works in India are not funded properly by the Government. Government has always accorded a high priority to scientific and technological research funding. There are several Government departments, agencies and organizations which provide funding for Research and Development in Science and Technology. The primary role of Department of Science and Technology, for example, is to provide funds for extramural Research and Development in academic institutions. Many other departments, such as the Department of Biotechnology, Department of Scientific and Industrial Research, Department of Ocean Development, Department of Agricultural Research and Extension/Indian Council of Agricultural Research, India Council of Medical Research also fund research and development activities within the allocated resources, which are subject to overall budgetary constraints, each Department has a well developed system of providing funding support to research projects, based on expert/peer review of the project proposal and its funding requirements in terms of manpower, equipment and other facilities.

The overall investment in Research and Development (of which the major share is of the Government) is estimated to go up from 0.81% of the GDP in 1998-99 to 1.2% in 2003-04 as a result of the priority accorded to Research and Development by the Government. It is hoped that in terms of the policy commitments of the Government, the investment in Research and development will increase to 2% of the GDP by the end of 10th Five Year Plan.

Cargo handled by Visakhapatnam part

480. SHRI S.M. LALJAN BASHA: Will the Minister of SHIPPING be pleased to state:

(a) what was the total tonnage of Cargo handled by Visakhapatnam port in 2003-04;